

# MCA Advisory



*The Journal of the Medal Collectors of America*

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## Annual Membership Dues:

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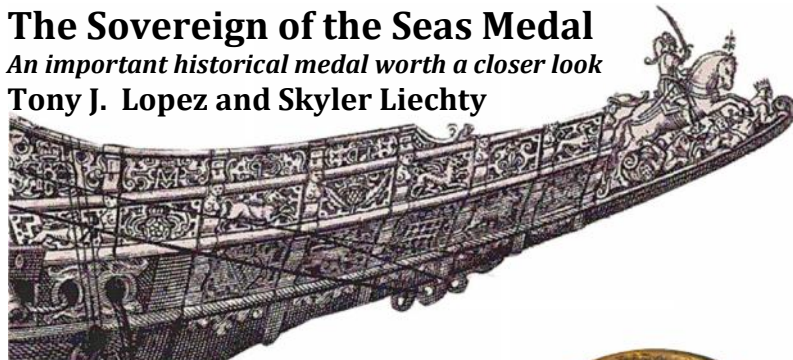
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August 7-10, 2012

Check out our MCA Website:



[WWW.MEDALCOLLECTORS.ORG](http://WWW.MEDALCOLLECTORS.ORG)

## ❧ President's Message ❧

Welcome to this edition of the Advisory. The year 2012 is off to a good start with a great MCA meeting in New York, several busy numismatic conventions and an active auction schedule with exnumia and medals in particular being featured items.

May I suggest that the upcoming warmer months are a great time to combine vacation and recreation time with the study of medals? First and foremost, there is the largest numismatic event of all, the ANA summer convention, this year located in Philadelphia. What a great venue for a numismatic convention! Philadelphia of course is the site of the first, and still most active, U.S. Mint, and the one which was normally responsible for producing the medals authorized by Congress. For collectors of 19<sup>th</sup> century medals, there is a bewildering array of medals which were struck at the Mint, as delineated by Bob Julian in his book on U.S. Mint medals struck from 1792 to 1892. Aside from government authorized issues, the Mint allowed the striking of private contract medals, hence the broad range of U.S. Mint medals, running the gamut from agricultural society medals to school awards; a stimulating collecting challenge.

Philadelphia was also home to one of the early sponsors of medals struck to commemorate the formation of our fledgling republic, Benjamin Franklin. You can tour the city and see various sites where Franklin lived and worked while in Philadelphia. The headquarters of the Union League, dating from the Civil War era, is located here. The League was responsible for the issuance of medals during the early years of its existence; other local groups and organizations also had medals issued for their members. Of course, there are many activities to keep one busy at the convention itself, including our MCA meeting, this year, scheduled on Thursday afternoon, August 9<sup>th</sup>. There are always interesting speakers scheduled throughout the week, as well as excellent medal exhibits to view. And the auctions and dealers provide great buying opportunities as well.

Aside from a trip to a numismatic convention, there are many other locations around the country, and the world, for that matter, which have numismatic collections and items of interest. The Smithsonian, British Museum, Massachusetts Historical Society and numerous other institutions have superb collections available for viewing. Many colleges and universities have numismatic collections, and occasionally, a curator who is knowledgeable and helpful in providing information. Just off the top of my head, I

can think of Dr. Alan Stahl at Princeton, Dr. William Metcalf at Yale and Dr. Louis Jordan at Notre Dame, curators with excellent numismatic credentials and willing to share their knowledge. Viewing early portraits of Washington at Mount Vernon gave me a better understanding of his images on early medals and coins. Trips to sites such as Colonial Williamsburg can give greater insight into the lives of the inhabitants; the personalities and the events and conditions impacting them would influence the issuing of tokens, medals and other numismatic items.

So don't forget about medals and numismatics during your vacation travels. It can enhance your experience, provide you with added fun and provide opportunities for increasing your knowledge. You never know; that all-important clue to some numismatic puzzle that has had you baffled may be waiting around the corner in that quaint Colonial homestead, historical society or country inn. 🪙

~David MENCHALL

***Join us in Philadelphia!***

*At the*

**American Numismatic Association**

**World's Fair of Money**

**August 7-11, 2012**

**Philadelphia Convention Center**



**MCA**

**Philadelphia Meeting**

**Thursday, August 9, 2012**

**3:00 PM**

**Location to be announced**

**[www.worldsfairofmoney.com](http://www.worldsfairofmoney.com)**



## From the Editor

Comments on our Jan-Feb issue have been extremely favorable, as well they should be - our production manager is a genius. Whether because of our new look and, perhaps, the Club medal, it is clear that members have been stimulated. As you peruse the letters to the Editor below, you can sense the excitement. Long may it continue thus (and may you be stimulated to drop us a line or do an article).

Speaking of our Production manager, Tony Lopez, he has once again joined forces with Skyler Liechty and they have outdone themselves with the lead article in this issue on the Sovereign of the Seas medal. In it, they challenge (and correct) the great writers on British Historical medals from Evelyn to Pinkerton to the iconic Hawkins to our own much-esteemed Chris Eimer. The Brits may be of a mind to start another war over this effrontery, but Tony and Skyler's case is so thoroughly built that they may just have to wave a white flag instead.

In Ford XIII, the cataloguer (the estimable Michal Hodder) comments on the 1556 series of NOVI ORBIS medals as follows: "C. Wyllys Betts never saw most of the variants.... And here more than almost anywhere else in his book, the listings require major revision." We would agree wholeheartedly, as no doubt would the dynamic duo of Lopez and Liechty. Their forensic research techniques, which we saw demonstrated at our Club meeting in Chicago, will add much to the European approach, which keys on the history. Combining the two promises, in the coming year or two, to bring our understanding of these imposing early medals to a whole new level.

In the same vein, we have been promised an article on the undated Indian peace medal of George II. After the Gilcrease book on Indian peace medals. George II is the last major hole in the literature. Many more of these were awarded than is commonly believed, both in the Northern and Southern colonies.

There has been joy in Mudville as the first 25 of our Club Medal in silver have been received and shipped out. We intend to make another five in this metal, plus another 30 in bronze (30 have been shipped) and that run will be the end of the project. Whereas the casting process has been painfully slow, the end product is well worth the wait. Emulating the technique of those who promote movies by using excerpts from reviews, we offer the following comments on the medal from just one recipient: "Gorgeous ! Stunning !...It made my hair stand on end not only because of the beauty of the medals but also because of the legacy provided to the club...of which I am an even prouder member than before. The talents

and generosity of Gerry (Muhl) and Alex (Shagin) shine through...."

We will hold the prices at \$200 for the silver and \$25 for the bronze though mid-May, after which the remainder, if any, will be offered at higher prices to the public. 🍀

~ John W Adams



**2012 MCA Medals**  
**Silver (above) Bronze (below)**



# The Sovereign of the Seas Medal

By

Tony J. Lopez and Skyler Liechty

Victor England's October 2011 MCA Advisory article describes the important history behind the gold Charles I "Dominion of the Seas" medal, the provenance of which originates with King Charles I himself. The article unveils the medal's incredible story: designed by Nicolas Briot, with an armoured bust of Charles I on the obverse, and a three deck (Britain's first), four masted ship of the line at sea on the reverse, it was given as a gift from King Charles I to his spiritual advisor Bishop William Juxon, in the midst of one of the most tumultuous and critical periods in British history. Great history, but as shall be argued below, mistaken numismatics.



The events and circumstances leading to Charles' presentation of this historic treasure to Juxon is complex and intertwined with European and British religious and political conflicts. To fully tell the important history of this critical time period would take volumes. Unfortunately, within the context of this article focusing primarily on the actual medal itself, we cannot do full justice to the historic events. Still, some elaboration of the history beyond that told in Mr. England's MCA Advisory article is necessary in order to unveil the medal's secrets.

## Charles I Religious and Political Turmoil

Following the death of King James I in 1625, his son Charles I, the second King from the House of Stuart, inherited the British crown. Charles would rule over the British Empire including the kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland. In practice, Charles had been acting in the capacity of King for at least a year prior to his coronation due to his father's protracted illness before his death. Charles inherited a powerful Kingdom, but also was heir to a profoundly complex quagmire of political and religious differences. These conflicts had been brewing for

generations, going back to the reign of Henry VIII over a century earlier.

Charles I was a devout Anglican, fully loyal to the Church of England, which at the time was the officially recognized religion of England. By decree in England, freedom of religion was limited in that all subjects were required to attend Anglican services, with fines and penalties imposed upon Catholics or protestant "Recusants" who chose to practice their own religion on English soil. The Scottish Parliament supported and recognized Protestant Presbyterianism. In Ireland, Catholicism prevailed. On the British Isles, these powerful religious groups struggled for recognition and power.



This 1631 painting of Charles I and Henrietta Maria by Anthony Van Dyck was hung in Charles' bedchamber

Religious and theological factions may have appeared geographic and territorial on the surface but, throughout the kingdom, there was an explosive mixture of religious beliefs and loyalties. Despite official unity, Charles' subjects in England, Scotland and Ireland were not theologically homogeneous; nor was Parliament. Religious turmoil was not limited to the British Isles. On the European mainland, a bloody Thirty Years War between Catholics and Protestants raged on.

Charles, following the path of his father, believed that the King held absolute power ordained by God. He exercised and imposed his "Royal Prerogative" by levying taxes against non-Anglican churches in England and Scotland. This belief and the King's use of absolute power were challenged by Protestants in Parliament. They were not only unhappy with the King's actions at home, but also frustrated over Charles' limited military support in Britain's alliance with the Protestants in the Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire against



Catholics in the Palatinate (the modern day German Rhineland).

The Protestant's concerns about royal sympathy towards their Catholic enemies in England and in mainland Europe was rampant. Charles was the grandson (and James I was the son) of Mary Queen of Scots, the Scottish Catholic Queen and Martyr of Catholic Scotland. There were many Protestants in parliament and elsewhere who believed that Charles was secretly Catholic. These concerns about Catholic favoritism were not without justification, and developed into an obsession in 1624, when Charles (then a prince, but fully recognized as the de facto monarch due to James' illness) was betrothed to the beautiful fifteen year-old French Catholic Princess Henrietta Maria. Charles reassured Parliament that no Catholic favoritism was involved in the betrothal, but their worries were legitimate; at the insistence of King Louis XIII of France, Charles had secretly included a promise of relief for the Catholic recusants.

### **Conflicts Abroad: Supporting the French Catholics or Protestants?**

While not directly related to the medal or its history, it is worth taking a side trip through history to give an example of the consequences and turmoil created by the manner in which Charles I exercised his Royal Prerogative as an absolute monarch. The most pertinent (and also secret) provision in the marriage contract was a promise of British military assistance to the Catholic French King in his own religious war.



**George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham by Paul Rubens 1625**

While Charles may have acted impulsively for the sake of winning his queen, ultimately, under his confused leadership, the British military forces were fighting on both sides of the same religious conflict: with the Protestants and against the Catholics in the

Palatinate, and with the Catholics and against the Protestants in France.

The battles in the Thirty Years War that took place on French soil are known as the French Wars of Religion. These hostilities centered on Catholics sponsored by Louis XIII battling French Protestant Huguenots occupying La Rochelle on the coast of France.



**The fortifications at Saint-Martin-de-Ré proved impregnable to Buckingham's forces**

The Monarchs on both sides of the English Channel were facing a dangerous mix of religion and politics. The promised English support of France against the Protestant Huguenots was negotiated between George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, on behalf of the King, and Cardinal Richelieu, French Prime Minister, for Louis XIII. Buckingham, a favorite of James I, seeking to emulate the great British victory over the Spanish Armada two generations earlier, had led the British fleet to an ignominious defeat by the Spanish in the Cádiz Expedition. Although British support was minimal, Buckingham would also command a small fleet of seven ships against the Huguenots at their coastal stronghold of La Rochelle. The ships were primarily crewed by French hands since the Protestant British sailors refused to battle against their French counterparts. Of course, as news of this alliance reached England, Protestants in the English Parliament were thoroughly outraged over the King's secret arrangement to provide military forces against the French Protestants. The King had betrayed their trust, and their worst fears were realized.

Charles was faced with a decisive moment, added to which Buckingham had lost all trust in Cardinal Richelieu. As a result, the British switched sides, and on July 12, 1627, three short years after Charles' agreement with the French monarch, the British forces now supported the French Huguenots. They undertook the Siege of Saint-Martin-de-Ré, intending to control all approaches to New Rochelle,

thus defending the Huguenots against any French attack.

Buckingham, now supporting the Protestants, commanded a force of 100 ships and nearly 8,500 armed British/ Irish forces and French Huguenots. He invaded the island of Ile de Ré, and moved to capture the Fort of La Prée as well as the fortified city of Saint Martin de Ré. After a four-month siege, nothing was gained. The British were ill-prepared for the task: fortifications at the stronghold of Saint-Martin-de-Ré proved impregnable to the undersized cannon of Buckingham's artillery and, worse yet, the ladders the British brought were too short to scale the walls. With autumn and colder weather approaching, disease began to decimate the troops. In desperation, a final unsuccessful attack was made before Buckingham abandoned his efforts in October 1627. The British suffered almost 5,000 casualties. In the end, Buckingham paid the ultimate price for his failure in battle: on August 23, 1628, he was assassinated by a disgruntled army officer who had served under him at La Rochelle.

### **Conflicts on the Home Front: The Wars of the Three Kingdoms and the Execution of Charles I**

Charles' profound differences with Parliament over Royal Authority would come to a head soon after he acceded to the throne on March 27, 1625 following the death of his father and predecessor James I. These troubles began even before his coronation on February 2, 1626.

Charles married the 15-year-old Catholic Maria Henrietta by proxy on May 1, 1625. He continued to claim publicly that the marriage contract had no Catholic favoritism. At the same time, Charles began secretly implementing the terms of his agreement with the French king. Protestant members of Parliament quickly noticed that penalties against the practice of Catholicism were not being enforced. Soon, Parliament began to question Charles' sincerity, leading to the drastic step of openly challenging the King's authority.

The First Parliament under Charles I met on June 18, 1625. For over 200 years, one of the primary sources of income for the British throne was the "tonnage and poundage" whereby duties were charged on every cask of wine and on all imports. Going back to Henry V in 1414, Parliament had always voted for every Monarch to have these duties for life. With Charles' first Parliament concerned about his loyalties, they now wanted to control the King's expenditures and limit the King's subsidies, basically refusing to vote any new taxes to support the King unless they could supervise it. As an intentional insult, the House of Commons decided to stop the

Monarch's centuries' old legacy, and granted Charles the tonnage and poundage duties for only one year and not for life as was given his predecessors.

In 1629, during the second session of parliament, Sir John Elliot, Charles' leading opponent, issued what was known as the "Three Resolutions", including a resolution against the Catholics, a resolution against Arminianism, and a resolution encouraging merchants to refuse to pay tonnage and poundage. Under the spirit of these resolutions, those paying the tonnage and poundage were to be considered betrayers of the liberties of England. Charles ordered the Speaker, Sir John Finch, to adjourn parliament, for the second time that year. Finally, on March 10, 1629 a Royal proclamation was issued announcing the permanent dissolution of parliament, therein beginning the period known as the Personal Rule or the Eleven Years' Tyranny. Ruling without Parliament worked as long as Charles did not need large amounts of money, because only Parliament could oblige such a request.



**An engraving of the Armies at Naseby with cartouche of Charles I published in 1647 by Robert Streeter**

With religious and political differences seething throughout the British Kingdom, war erupted in 1639, first the Bishops' War in Scotland, followed by the Irish Rebellion in 1641. Then three English Civil Wars broke out between Parliament and the Monarchy, the first in 1642, the second in 1647, and the third in 1649. Collectively these conflicts, including all three English Civil Wars are known as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. War would continue in the British Isles until 1651, but the state of affairs in Britain would remain unsettled until the Restoration of the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland under Charles II in 1660.

Following defeats at Naseby and later the defense of Chester during the First Civil War, Charles left his camp at Oxford and surrendered to the Scots on April 27, 1646, after which he was handed over to Parliament in January of 1647. After nearly a year of



imprisonment, Charles escaped from Hampton Court to the Isle of Wright in mid November, and, while under house arrest there at Carisbrooke Castle, was able to make an agreement with the Scots for regaining power.

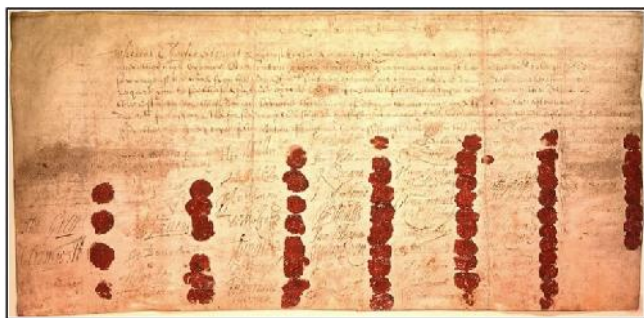
Charles second bout with Parliament in the Second Civil War proved disastrous. Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentary Army, though vastly outnumbered, caught the Scottish force spread out over 50 miles, and defeated them in the Battle of Preston on August 19, 1648.



**Oliver Cromwell 1650 Battle of Dunbar medal by Thomas Simon, Cromwell led the Parliamentary Army at Dunbar. Parliament is depicted in session on the reverse.**

Charles remained in power while Parliament negotiated terms without resolution. By 1648, the army and factions in Parliament had grown impatient with Charles' authority and opposition in the civil wars. Parliament blamed the King, and sought retribution for the death and suffering caused during these conflicts. While the Independents, a minority in Parliament, demanded retribution, Charles remained King.

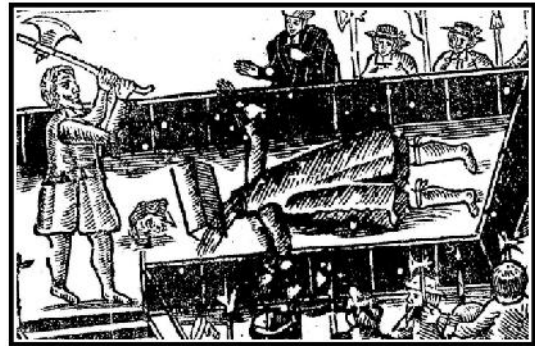
A coup d'état was brewing. As the stalemate with Parliament continued, the Army took matters into its own hands. On December 6, 1648, Colonel Thomas Pride's Regiment of Foot took up position on the stairs leading to the House of Parliament, with Pride personally acting as gate keeper; Nathaniel Rich's Regiment of Horse provided backup. As Members of Parliament arrived, Pride checked them against a list provided to him. Troops arrested 45 Members and kept 146 from entering the deliberations.



**January 29, 1649 Death Warrant of King Charles I Signed by Members of the High Court of Justice**

What remained of Parliament soon charged Charles I of "waging war on Parliament." In January of 1649, Charles was accused of responsibility for "all the murders, burnings, damages and mischiefs to the nation" in the preceding Civil Wars.

Charles was tried on January 27, 1649 by the High Court of justice, and found "guilty of levying war against Parliament and peoples..." Charles was sentenced to death: "For all which treasons and crimes this Court doth adjudge that he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body."



**Contemporary image of the decapitation of Charles I; Bishop Juxon is seen standing next to the scaffold at top. Most reports have Juxon on the scaffold with the king.**

On January 30, 1649 Bishop Juxon performed last rights for his friend and leader, the condemned Charles I. Juxon accompanied Charles as his spiritual supporter as the King was led to the scaffold where he was then decapitated by sword on the executioners block. Charles' last words to his people were: "*I have delivered to my conscience; I pray God you do take those courses that are best for the good of the kingdom and your own salvation.*"

### **The "Dominion of the Seas" medals**

The gold medal design given by Charles I to Bishop Juxon in the weeks before his final judgment and execution is listed in the opus of British historical medals, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the Death of George I* ("MI") by Edward Hawkins. Hawkins lists this medal in volume I, page 285, number 97 in the original 1885 edition of *Medallic Illustrations*, and gives the medal the title "Dominion of the Seas".

There are five varieties of Charles I "Dominion of the Seas" medals; four of them are listed in MI; two are smaller jetons, and two are large medals. There is also an unusual large oval medal unlisted in MI. All the medals have the basic design elements with a bust of Charles I on the obverse and a Royal Navy ship of the line at sea on the reverse:

- Undated (attributed as 1630) Charles I w/large ruffle collar medal, 58 mm: MI I, 256, 41; (Gold medal image courtesy of British Museum)



- 1630 Charles I w/large ruffle collar jeton, 28mm: MI I, 257, 42;



- 1630 Charles I w/armour and Van Dyke collar jeton, 27mm: MI I, 257, 43



- 1639 Charles I w/Armour medal 60mm: MI I 285, 97; (The Gold Juxon Medal courtesy of CNG Numismatics)



- Undated Charles I w/large ruffle collar Large Oval 51 x 40mm; lead (example in the National Maritime Museum)



### A Mistaken Chronology in Medalllic Illustrations

In naming this group of medals “Dominion of the Seas”, Hawkins explains in his description of the first large (1630) medal: “It was issued in assertion of the claim of England to the dominion of the sea as claimed by Selden and in accordance with Charles's instructions to his Minister at the Hague (Sir William Boswell): *“We hold it a principle not to be denied that the King of Great Britain is a Monarch at sea and land to the full extent of his dominions. His Majesty finds it necessary for his own defense and safety to reassume and keep his ancient and undoubted right in the dominion of these seas”*.”

Hawkins lists the medals in MI by chronological order. He places the undated large ruffled medal first, and just before the smaller 1630 dated jetons, attributing an issue date of 1630; an indication that the large medal was issued concurrently with the 1630 jetons. He lists the larger Juxon medal with the armoured portrait of Charles later in MI, based upon the incised 1639 date on the truncation of the bust.

For over three centuries, this chronology and description of these medals has been accepted as gospel by medal collectors. The dating and definition of the medals as represented by Hawkins is repeated in references as well as sales and auction catalogs for over a century, and has been perpetuated to the present date, including the current sales description of the gold Juxon medal, and the listings of these medals in the recently published *British Commemorative Medals and their Values* by Christopher Eimer.

A closer look, however, begins to cast doubt on Hawkins' chronology. In discussing the first large medal, again he states that the (1630) medal was “*issued in assertion of the claim of England to the dominion of the sea as claimed by Selden*”. In stating this, Hawkins is no doubt referring to the publication of John Selden's *Mare Clausum: Seu De Domino*

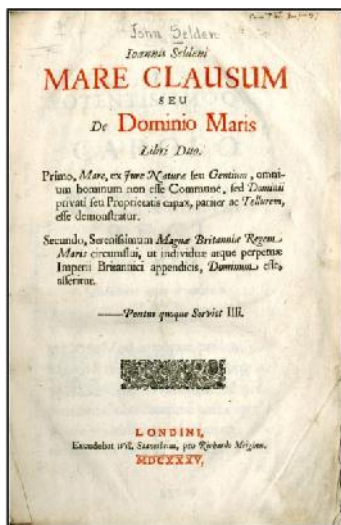


*Maris* (The Right and Dominion of the Sea), where Selden discusses the legal ramifications of the dominion of the seas.

In his foreword, Selden dedicates the book to King Charles I, stating that “*Pontus quousque serviet illi*” (The Sea will Submit to Him). The importance of the work to Charles personally was evidenced when the King ordered three copies of *Mare Clausum*, one for the Council chest, another for the Court of Admiralty, and the third for the Court of Exchequer.

Then To further support his assertion that the large undated medal – and the two jetons and 1639 medal that followed – was created to celebrate the King’s dominion of the seas, Hawkins adds Charles’ own instructions given to Minister of The Hague, Sir William Boswell. The quote given by Hawkins is in fact extracted from a letter from Secretary of State Sir John Coke to Sir William Boswell.

There is a major problem with Hawkins’ description of these medals: *Mare Clausum* was published in 1635, and the letter from Secretary Coke to Boswell was written on April 21, 1635 – with both events occurring five years after the 1630 date given by Hawkins for the issuance of the undated medal – and thus preceding the described purpose for the medal; as well as the justification for Hawkins naming the medal “Dominion of the Seas”.



**1635 Latin Cover Page from John Selden’s Mare Clausen**

Now let us examine the issue of the two jetons, both of which actually have a date of 1630, and are called “Dominion of the Seas” by Hawkins for the same reasons as the large medal. Both of these also predate the justification for their given purpose and title.

Having refuted Hawkins’ explanation and chronology, the undated medal may or may not been issued in 1630, but these medals cannot now be

“Dominion of the Seas” medals. So what then are they?

It is clear from MI that Hawkins has tied the four medals together, and given them the same title based upon their common design elements. Hawkins may have missed the importance of a simple explanation for the common designs: Nicolas Briot designed and signed all four medals and may have simply reconstituted his design for different purposes.

### **Charles rebuilds the Royal Navy**

At this point, it is important to examine the thinking of Charles I as to the importance of the military strength of his Kingdom. Charles’ close relationship with George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, and Buckingham’s importance as the prominent advisor to Charles early in his reign was the primary cause for Charles’ first great rift with Parliament. Charles tolerated Parliament when it challenged his income and financial authority, but Parliament’s early attempt to control the Kings’ advisors was the last straw. Parliament opposed the influence of Buckingham and, indeed, moved to impeach him. On August 16, 1625, Charles dissolved Parliament for the first time in order to protect Buckingham.

Buckingham and Charles shared a common vision of the importance of the strength and power of the British Navy. Charles was absolutely dedicated to rebuilding and recreating the glory days of the British Navy when it defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. In October, only two months after he dissolved Parliament, he sent Buckingham to lead a fleet of British warships to their ill fated defeat against the Spanish at Cádiz. In 1627, the British would again fail to prove their Naval might under the leadership of Buckingham when they opposed and then supported the French Huguenots.

Charles was never dissuaded from his dream of a powerful Royal Navy, even after the assassination of Buckingham in 1628. Charles imposed a Navy Tax on coastal communities in 1634 to build up the Royal Navy. In 1635, the tax was extended to inland communities. The Navy tax was highly controversial and unlike other forms of Royal taxation, the Navy Tax was imposed on rich and poor alike. The King’s popularity among all of his people began to diminish.

The King was focused on his dream – his dedication to the greatness of the Royal Navy would never falter. He began to build warships, including his namesake, the 48 gun HMS Charles which was completed in 1632. For the King, however, there was only one way to make certain that the British navy was the greatest fighting force on the seas – he would build the single greatest warship in the world.

## The King's great ship Sovereign of the Seas

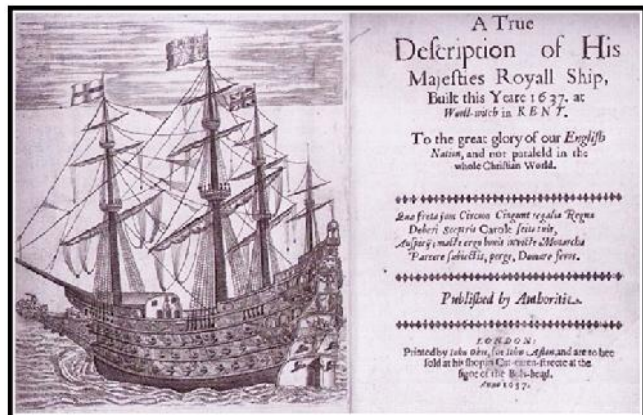
In August of 1634, with the influx of new income from the Navy Tax, Charles ordered the construction of the Sovereign of the Seas. Designed



A 1630's engraving of Charles I's great ship Sovereign of the Seas is inaccurate in its depiction and missing the fourth Bonaventure mizzen mast

and built under the leadership of Peter Pett, the four masted first-rate ship-of-the-line was to have three full decks containing 102 guns as ordered by the King, far surpassing the size of the then largest British warship the HMS Prince Royal, also constructed under Pett. The Prince Royal, built in 1610 had had only 55 guns and two and a half decks though it had been had been refitted up to 3 decks in 1621.

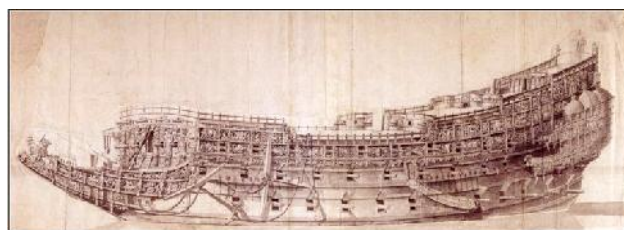
The mammoth Sovereign of the Seas was for Charles the epitome of his vision of the most powerful kingdom in the world. The King made frequent visits to Woolrich to meet with Pett and check on the progress of the construction. The ship was completed and launched on October 13, 1637.



In June 1637, Thomas Heywood published a brochure describing King Charles I's Sovereign of the Seas

In addition to its incredible armaments and size, with a length of 127 feet and beam of 46.5 feet, the Sovereign of the Seas was the most elaborately decorated ship of the time. There were ornate gilt

carvings covering the entire ship, signifying the greatness of the King and the Royal Navy. Each of the 102 bronze guns was engraved with the motto "Carolus Edgari sceptrum stabilivit aquarum" (Charles established the Dominion of Edgar over the Seas). Prominently featured on the bow of the ship, below the bowsprit, was a figurehead statue of King Edgar on horseback, trampling the seven kings. Charles had accomplished exactly what he set out to do; he had built the largest and most powerful warship of the time.



Sovereign of the Seas hull from a 1659-60 drawing by Willem Van de Velde the Elder from a Sotheby's January 2006 sale where it realized \$108,000.00

The impact of the great ship did not go unnoticed. With the enormous size of the Sovereign of the Seas, and the extensive gilt decoration, the Dutch gave the vessel the nickname "The Golden Devil".

## The Sovereign of the Seas medal

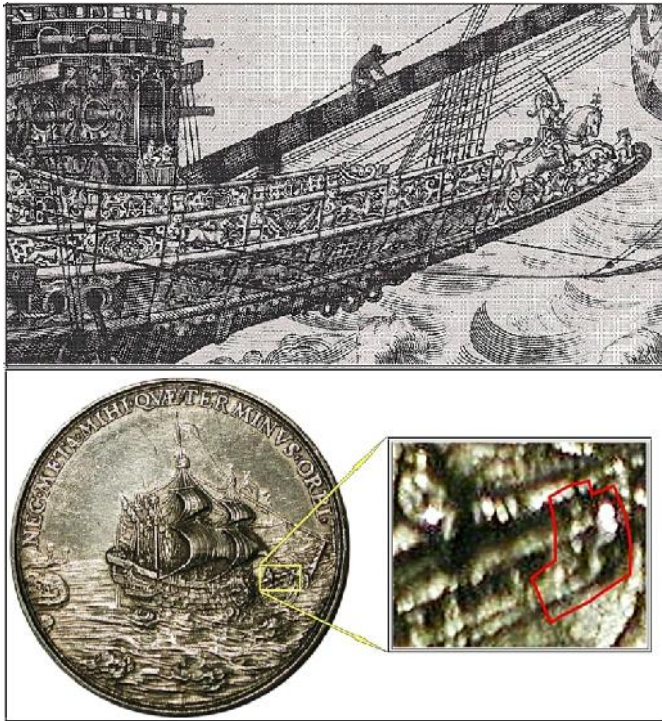
Hawkins and all of those following him have connected the large ruffled undated medal with the 1639 medal of similar design. Hawkins states that the image of Charles on the 1639 dated medal without the ruffle has "a difference in the portrait of the king, which is older." While this assertion by Hawkins would conveniently account for the nine year difference between the issuance of the two large medals, in a photographic overlay and comparison of the busts on the two large medals, there is absolutely nothing about the features on the 1639 dated medal that would indicate it is an older portrait of Charles. It is noteworthy that the 1630 dated jetons come in two versions, one with Charles having a ruffle, short hair, and short moustache, and the other with the Van Dyke collar, longer hair and a longer moustache. The large medals nearly match these versions with the only difference being the Van Dyke collar; one bust with the ruffle, shorter hair and shorter moustache, the other with armour and long hair and moustache. With these two jeton versions of Charles done by Briot, it is much more reasonable to suggest that Briot was simply enlarging the two versions of the King when creating the medals.

The question remains: when was the large undated medal created? The answer lies on the reverse design of the ship. If one looks closely at the tip of the prow of the ship on the medal, below the



bowsprit, one will see the figurehead of King Edgar on horseback. This did require locating a high grade well struck example of the undated medal as it is not easy to see this fine detail on most examples of the medal. This tiny but important detail does not always strike up and becomes quickly obliterated with wear. Here, then, is a ship with four masts, three decks and a distinctive prow with the figurehead of King Edgar on horseback – i.e. the Sovereign of the Seas!

With this clarity, when you look again at the ship on the medal, and look at the images and description of the Sovereign of the Seas, you realize that everything about the ship makes it the Sovereign of the seas, and no other. And by elimination it must be the Sovereign of the Seas, as the only other four masted three decked British Warship at the time was the HMS Prince, which had a stubby prow, and not the long extended prow seen on both the medal and the Sovereign of the Seas. (Though there are dutch pintings such as



**The ship on the reverse of the silver undated medal clearly shows Briot depicted the Sovereign of the Seas with the figurehead of King Edgar on horseback. The figurehead also appears on a period engraving above by J. Payne. Both also have a sailor climbing along the bowsprit.**

Once again, the chronology of actual events overrides Hawkins: the Sovereign of the Seas was not completed until late in 1637, and with this great ship of Charles I on the reverse of the undated medal, it could only have been designed and created post 1637.

For Charles I, his Sovereign of the Seas signified the re-creation of the British Empire as the

foremost naval power in the world. The large medals, with a bust of the King on the obverse, and his great ship Sovereign of the Seas on the reverse were struck to the glory of the King who possessed the ultimate weapon.

While medal collectors have forged ahead steadfastly believing Hawkins misrepresentations, collectors of decorations, knowing the actual history, have not followed suit.

In *Medals of the British Navy and how they were Won*, (William H. Long, London, 1895, page 8) it states that “*Charles I. . . built at Woolrich, in 1637, the ‘Royal Sovereign of the Seas’ the first three-decked ship in the Royal Navy, he struck a large medal, or rather medallion in commemoration of the event. On the obverse is a bust of the King in armour with his usual titles, and on the reverse a representation of the ‘Sovereign of the Seas’. . . there are two varieties of this medal. . . on the obverse of one the King is represented with a ruff, and on the other wearing a plain falling band, with long curling hair.*” The medal pictured there on page 8 is actually the large undated medal with Charles wearing the Ruff, (MI I, 256, 41).



**1645-1650 Peter Lily painting shows the elaborate stern carvings on Sovereign of the Seas, and shipbuilder Peter Pett in the foreground. The huge red ensign appears on both the painting and Briot's undated large medal.**

The fact that references for British historical medals have gotten this wrong has not gone unnoticed. In *Commentaries on the Life and Reign of Charles the First, King of England* (Isaac Disraeli, London, 1851, Volume II page 45), in the chapter entitled “The Sovereignty of the Seas” Disraeli states that “*Charles the First struck several medals to commemorate the glorious event (building of the Sovereign of the Seas) after the treaty with Holland. . . \**”. In the footnote below: “*\*It is an extraordinary omission in Evelyn's rambling work on medals that he should not have noticed these testimonies of the triumph (building the Great Ship) of Charles I and of England. Nor are they in Pinkerton's Medallic History of England. I have seen some in the collection*

of British medals in the British Museum.” Apparently medal references have been off-track for over three centuries: “Evelyn’s rambling work” is John Evelyn’s 1697 publication of *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals*. Only two generations after the actual events, medal collecting took a wrong turn, and to this day, never turned back.

### The 1630 Jetons – Betts Medals?

Arguably the purpose of the smaller jetons relates to the most significant event of 1630, the Treaty of Madrid, which ended the Anglo-Spanish War (1625-1630). This conflict pitted Spain against England and the United Provinces. Although a costly fiasco for England, for Spain it was a minor episode.

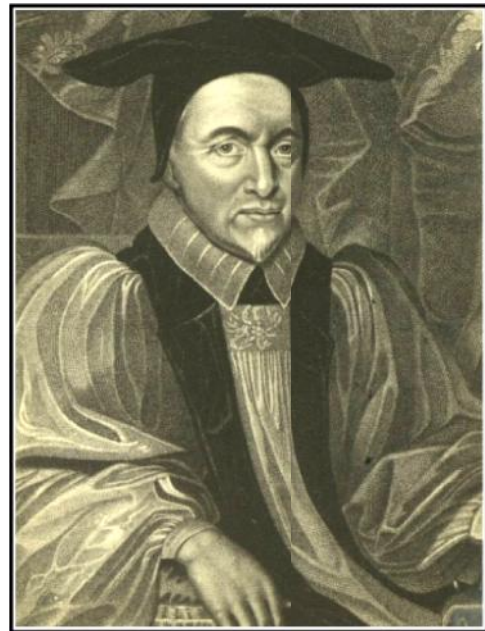
Sir Francis Cottington, an English member of the pro-Spanish party, was sent by England to negotiate the treaty at Madrid. He was to conclude an article respecting trade with the Indies in the general terms used in the treaty of 1604, without confining British subjects to be more restricted in that trade than the subjects of any other nation. Extracts from the truce of Antwerp and from the guaranty treaty of The Hague, wherein particular mention is made of ‘the Indies’, were sent for his guidance. Particularly interesting is article seven, stating: “it was and is agreed and settled that between the Most Serene King of the Spain’s and the Most Serene King of England and the vassals, inhabitants of their kingdoms, and subjects of each of them, there shall and ought to be free commerce, both by land and by sea and fresh waters, in all and singular their kingdoms, dominions, and islands, and other lands, cities, towns, villages, harbors, and straits of the said kingdoms and dominions, where there was commerce between the said kingdoms before the war between Philip II., King of the Spain’s, and Elizabeth, Queen of England, according as it was settled in the treaty of peace of the year 1604”. By this article it was understood that free commerce would have included territories in the America’s. Are the jetons therefore “Betts” medals?

Article two of this treaty calls for restitution of captured ships and damages thereto in the Narrow seas. This could account for the warship seen on the reverse of the jetons. The interpretation of the expression "Narrow Seas", where the English kings claimed "sovereignty", became extended by the English after the early years of the seventeenth century, to include not only the channel between England and France, but also the sea between England and the Netherlands.

### The Juxon Gold Sovereign of the Seas medal

The reverse of Victor England’s Charles I medal clearly shows the distinctive features of the

Sovereign of the Seas, there being three full decks with Edgar on Horseback on the prow. There is a gold example of the undated medal in the British Museum also showing these devices. Short of Briot being prophetic, there is no way the undated example of the medal was struck prior to 1637. A third gold example is the same design as that of the British Museum. The last recorded auction of this particular example was by Morten and Eden on the 21st of April 2005. It was lot 39, ex Sotheby’s sale of December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 1992.




**Bishop William Juxon, Spiritual Advisor to King Charles I**

At the conclusion of his article, Mr. England avers that “The present medal, with its unbroken chain of ownership running from its maker, Nicolas Briot, to Charles I, then to William Juxon and on to today, makes this the single most important medal in the British series.” The medal is indeed important, but superlatives aside, what is for certain is that “Dominion of the Seas”, though endorsed by Hawkins and his spiritual successors, is an utter misnomer. This lovely medal depicts a ship, *The Sovereign of the Seas*, the very special features of which now shine forth for all to see.

### About Nicholas Briot

The medal’s engraver Nicholas Briot was born in 1579 at Damblain in Lorraine, France. From 1605 to 1625, he was the engraver general of coins for France under Louis XIII. Briot, being a Protestant Huguenot, was under strict supervision in highly Catholic France. This ultimately led to his flight from France to England. In 1625 the offer of improving the Royal Mint’s machinery was accepted by Charles I, and on the 16th of December 1628, the King granted Briot the privilege to frame and engrave the first



designs and effigies of the King's images "in size and forms as are to serve in all sorts coins of gold and silver". In January 1633 he received an appointment as chief engraver to the English mint, and in 1635 became master of the Scottish mint. Briot remained in the King's service until the time of his death in 1646. Briot's invention of the coin-press, which was a vast improvement over the screw press, was his greatest contribution to coinage. 

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# An Extraordinary Exhibition: The Renaissance Portrait from Donatello to Bellini

By  
Stephen K. Scher

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in conjunction with the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, organized an exhibition devoted to Italian portraiture of the fifteenth century that opened in New York on December 21, 2011, and closed on March 18, 2012. Admittedly, this brief review will come after-the-fact, for which you can blame its author, who had originally promised your editor an earlier notice that would have left members of the MCA adequate time to view it, (mea culpa). Including paintings, sculpture drawings, and medals, the exhibition explored the development of early Italian Renaissance portraiture from its first appearance in Florence, its cultivation in the Northern Italian courts of Ferrara, Mantua, Milan, Urbino, and Rimini, to its late manifestation in Venice.



Giovanni II Bentivoglio Ruler of Bologna in Parade Armor, by Savelli Sperandio, pre- 1482; 96mm cast bronze

Although the depiction of the recognizably specific features of a subject began to appear in the North in France in the fourteenth century in panel painting, manuscript illumination, and tomb sculpture, the culture of Renaissance Italy, with its foundation in classical antiquity, its humanist philosophy, in which



1444 Marriage medal of Leonello d'Este, ruler of Ferrara, Reggio, and Modena, to Maria of Aragon. By Pisanello (Antonio Pisano). (Obverse) Cast copper alloy, 98mm

the importance of the individual through his or her accomplishments assumes a new importance, leads to the production of biography and portraiture. The celebration of the individual found its most original and perhaps most distinctly Renaissance manifestation in the portrait medal, which is essentially invented in Italy around 1438 with the work of Antonio Pisanello (c. 1395-1455). Based upon the model of ancient



coinage, among other sources, these small, portable, reproducible, durable objects, could celebrate a person's accomplishments, beliefs, social status, aspirations, and identity in a unique fashion. Their immediate popularity and widespread production testifies to their fulfillment of a special need generated by a new philosophy of Man.

The quality of the objects in the exhibition was astounding, loans coming from many private and public collections, and the mingling of the various media was extremely important and provocative. What is most important to us, of course, was the prominence given to medals. A great many were exhibited, and an effort was made, for the most part successfully, to display the medals in an intelligent fashion: They were mounted upright on crescent-shaped holders in free-standing cases so that both obverse and reverse were available, a rarity in almost any museum display. The lighting, however, was not always sufficient, since it was restricted to spotlights mounted very high overhead. One needed to bring a flashlight to see some of the surfaces.



**1441 Leonello d'Este, Marquess of Ferrara, by Pisanello. Celebrates peace under d'Este with old and young man holding baskets of olive branches, and two bombs extinguished by rain. Cast Copper alloy, 69mm.**

There was a small, but choice, selection of Florentine medals, including Bertoldo's depiction of the Pazzi Conspiracy in conjunction with the terracotta bust and two painted portraits of Giuliano de' Medici, Niccolò Fiorentino's medal of Lorenzo, and the death mask of the latter.

The richest array of medals was displayed in the rooms devoted to the northern courts, the most conspicuously beautiful being, of course, those of Pisanello shown with some of his drawings and his painted portrait of Leonello d'Este. One never ceases to be amazed by the poetic invention of his reverses and the sensitivity of his portraits, which include the Emperor John VIII Paleologus, Filippo Maria Visconti, Cecilia Gonzaga, Sigismondo Malatesta, and four medals of Leonello d'Este. Sperandio, too, was well represented, as was Matteo de' Pasti's medals of Sigismondo Malatesta and his beautiful consort, Isottadegli Atti. There were, significantly, no medals

in the Venetian section, the fiercely republican attitude of that city acting as a deterrent to the celebration of the individual except in relatively rare examples. Such medals exist, but come at a later date and were not considered relevant to this exhibition.



**Vittorino da Feltre, "Marthematician and Father of all Humanists", 1446, by Pisanello. Cast copper alloy 66mm**

All of the different early manifestations of the portrait were present and provoked much thought and discussion regarding purpose; presentation, i.e., profile, three-quarter view, neutral setting, in a room, with or without a landscape background, contact or not with the viewer; original location; medium; influences, especially from the North, i.e., Flanders; condition; and even, in a few cases, identity and authenticity. Noted scholars explore many of these questions in the excellent essays and the extensive entries in the lavishly produced and illustrated catalogue.

In the end, this was a show not to be missed, one that will stimulate discussion for many years to come, both from viewing it and from reading the catalogue. 🍷

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## ✧ Letters to the Editor ✧

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**From:** Sim Comfort  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 5:50 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** Thank You!!

Hello John,

Many thanks for Indian Peace Medals which arrived today. Wonderful publication!!! I really do like a well designed and crafted book.

As you are in the wilds of Maine, I don't know if I should send you an extra snow shovel or a copy of Forget Me Not, which may prove a pleasant peruse beside the winter's log fire.

If you don't have a copy, please let me know as it would give me great pleasure to send one to you in response to your fine gift.  
Best regards, Sim

• • • •

**From:** John Adams  
**To:** Sim Comfort  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 2:06 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Thank You!!

Good morning, Sim - Forget the shovel. I do have a place in the remote Adirondack wilderness, but we spend most of our time here in Dover, which is 15 miles west of Boston. And I would love to receive a signed copy of Forget Me Not, which I promise to read by the fire.

As always, John

P.S. Were any of the Rodney medals in Milford Haven award medals?

[*Forget me Not* is indeed a great read. We comment it heartily to our readers. Ed.]

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**From:** Sim Comfort  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 29, 2012 8:24 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** Re: Thank You!!

Hello John,

Yes, like London, no snow and only frost a couple of nights. Days mainly in the high 40s low 50s and there are daffodils in bloom in Wimbledon Park!

As for Rodney, I don't have any record of a formal presentation, however the attached type of Ville de Paris badges, (and two larger types), certainly beckon toward some sort of informal award.

They may have been simply a speculative venture by a jeweller, or they may have been ordered by Rodney for distribution to his officers or officers' ladies. We just don't have anything firm at all, certainly wish we did!

BTW, I'm looking for an example of the Saint Eustatius Rodney medal MH 382 / BHM 230.

If you have a spare one, I'd certainly like to buy it. FMN goes in the post to you tomorrow.

Best regards, Sim

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**From:** Sim Comfort  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2012 8:56 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** Fw: Sim's Polar Medal

Hi John,

Thought you'd enjoy seeing Sim's latest project. The following is a Polar Day announcement!!

Best regards, Sim

Hello  
Today marks 100 years since Captain Scott and his men reached the South Pole.

Thought you might like to see the mock-up for the new polar medal that Sim Comfort Associates will be publishing in the next couple of months which for the first time remembers the achievements of both Roald Amundsen and Captain Scott.

The image of Amundsen and his men is based on a bronze plaque by the Danish artist Jens Willumsen and it is the style of Willumsen that will be used to translate the montage of Scott and his men by the Polish artist Danuta Solowiej who will be producing the final medal designs.



There will be a multi page A5 colour brochure accompanying the medal which will tell the story of the Race to the South Pole.

The medal will be 6.5 cms in diameter and contain around 3 troy ounces of silver.

The edition is limited to just 100 examples and will sell for £395.00 plus VAT, if applicable.

SCA worked with Malcolm Appleby on the Appleby Trafalgar Medal which won gold and silver awards at the 2005 Goldsmith's competition.

You may see what we have done at:

[www.simcomfort.demon.co.uk](http://www.simcomfort.demon.co.uk)

Best regards,  
Sim Comfort

[As with all that Sim does, the Race to the South Pole is a quality undertaking. Ed.]

• • • •

Dear John,

The MCA medal is SUPERB ! The photos don't remotely do it justice ! The way the central disc is offset from the main field of the medal, as if one coin is being punched out of another, is not only an artistic coup, but a detail that would certainly seem to predispose to die failure. Anyway, thanks for all the effort you put into bringing it to fruition!

Harry (Salyards)

[High praise, coming from such a distinguished numismatist. Ed.]

• • • •

Dear John,

I would like to share with you another George III medium size medal (your 8.1 with obverse die break). It was sent to me by a fellow who has owned it for years, though not a medal collector, asking for my advice on it. He acquired it from the sons of a PA collector of many years ago, name he has forgotten. It is, as the images show, in really nice condition. However it does not ring like a silver medal and weighs but 36.1gms. It is 58mm. Could this be a white medal like your Modern census 13.? I was

wondering if it could be a shell, but so far none such has been discovered at least in this size. Looking at the large size shells, their weights tend to run ca. 50-70% the weight of the solids. 36.1 is 61-89% of the weights listed for the medium size.

What is the specific gravity of white medal to silver?

Just got your F&I War Heritage catalog. What a delight to see such a variety in such fine condition. Will be pleased to hear your thoughts on the auction firms you have consigned to.

Best regards, Rod Blackburn



• • • •

Good morning, Rod

I think your analysis is spot on and would love to use it in The Advisory when you are free to do so. I would add that the hangar is right and that the rim appears to be of separate construction -if the maker is going to use two pieces for the final product, why not three? I vote for shells.

The metal appears to be silver. A little Ivory soap on a Q-Tip might reveal more of the surface and confirm this (but do rinse thoroughly). The SG of silver is 10.5 and tin 7.5. The problem with a test for SG, which I would happily perform, is that the filler (if shells) might alter the results a bit. Nonetheless, there is so much difference between the two metals, that a test should be conclusive.

Yours is an exciting discovery in that, as you know, the medium size medals of George III were generally 100% die struck.

My very best, John

• • • •

Dear John,

I hope that you do not mind the familiarity, but Philip Attwood has suggested I get in touch with you about a possible contribution to your handsome Journal (Volume 14, 6 was given to me by Philip). You may recognise my name from various contributions to *The Medal* and to FIDEM lectures, or perhaps not. My own area of interest is in the modern medal, and I am the Director of the Student Medal Project in the UK, as well as being one of the Secretaries of BAMS. I have had an idea, and I would like to propose this to you. Because I write about contemporary medals it is about an artist and her new medal. Jane MacAdam Freud, whose father Lucian Freud died recently, has just completed a stunning medal of her father's head on the obverse and lettering on the reverse. It will be shown at the Student Medal Project exhibition in Glasgow (this is not the FIDEM show, but one being arranged specifically for students and teachers) in the summer. Jane also teaches at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. What I am proposing is just a short piece about this specific medal, how it came to be created, perhaps a drawing as well, and a short amount about Jane herself. I realize that you mainly concentrate on historical medals, but perhaps your readers would welcome something like this

occasionally, and especially about such a distinguished artist/medallist?

Do let me know if the MacAdam Freud idea appeals to you, and if it does, what kind of time scale do you have. Jane has images, so that is easy to send also.

With best wishes, Marcy

[We await with excitement any contribution from such distinguished authors. Current plans are to print this piece in the May-Jun issue. Ed.]

• • • •

Dear John,

To my good fortune, I bought lots 6049, 6050, and 6051 - the Jefferson, George III and Pitt framed shells - at the Stacks Bowers Americana sale. I passed on the Washington, having already one in my collection. Having the Washington probably prompted me to get these three others. The Pingo/Marchant initials on the Jefferson and George III shells identified the Washington as a Pingo creation, i.e. very late 18th century.

Since I am a medal, and not a frame collector, and to protect the medals from being scratched by broken glass, I extracted the shells from their frames. After seeing them exposed from behind 200 years of dirty glass, I knew immediately there was something very special about these shells. They were not only struck; the shells were gold washed to create a matte finish, and then each letter in the surrounding legends was meticulously bright-cut engraved to make the top of each letter shiny.

Wait...if you engrave a gilt brass shell, you cut through the gilt. Underneath, you will not have a shiny reflective gold result...unless....

And they sure are heavy...OK, I won't draw this out any further....the shells are GOLD!

Yes, a contemporary medal of both Washington and Jefferson in gold. And the first medallion portrait of Jefferson to boot. The same day I figure out that I have a WBB without an eye (but more on this anon). All from the same Stacks sale.

Better to be lucky than smart... Tony Lopez

[We disagree. Mr. Lopez is both lucky AND smart !! These are fabulous discoveries with, given his oblique



comment about WBB (Washington Before Boston), more to come. Ed.]

• • • •

**From:** Larry Gaye [lgaius.larry@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 04, 2012 12:48 PM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** Jan/FebJournal

Dear John,

I was completely bowled over by this issue. Nice work and thanks to you and the contributors for such a wonderful issue. The quality of the *MCA Advisory* is never in question. I enjoy each issue- they inspire me on so many levels. See you in Philadelphia.

Larry Gaye  
Numismatist

• • • •

**From:** Joel Orosz  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 01, 2012 7:55 PM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** Re: January February 2012 MCA Advisory Electronic Edition

Dear John:

I will certainly look forward to seeing them!

The latest *MCA Advisory* was top-notch. I particularly enjoyed your provocative piece on Benedict Arnold. There can be no question but that Arnold was deserving of honors for his valiant battlefield exploits, and had he been treated better by Congress and the Governor of Pennsylvania, he might have been immortalized on American medals, rather than living in American infamy. Of course, marrying a Tory didn't help...

Warm regards,

Joel

• • • •

**From:** Joe Foster  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 01, 2012 5:02 PM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** MCA joe foster

Hello John:

Received my copy of Jan-Feb MCA Advisory....kudos to all the authors....great stuff ...and to Tony Lopez for his "producing work"... I also totally agree with Tony Lopez's review of your French and Indian War medals....as you most probably know, I sold my Indian peace medal collection and Canadian medals by Leroux numbers, keeping only French regime, McGill, prince of Wales, Quebec Tercentenary, and Chateau Ramezay medals.....my French and Indian war pieces were complete...JUST NO GOLD!!!! And not all in the condition of yours!!!!

Very best regards,

Joe

• • • •

**From:** Ken Traub [ktraub@rochester.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2012 9:31 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** RE: My "Paris in London Medal" Article in the MCA Advisory

Hi John, I just received my MCA Advisory and was thrilled to see my article and that it was supplemented with "The Great Wheel at Earl's Court" picture postcard. Was that in your collection?

Thanks,  
Ken

[The Great Wheel was searched out by Tony Lopez, who else? Ed.]

• • • •

**From:** George Kolbe  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 29, 2012 8:08 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** MCA Advisory

Dear John,

WOW. I won't say that I poured over every page but it is obvious that, visually, MCA Advisory is now equal to the excellence of its content.

All best,  
  
George

• • • •

**From:** Harry & Phyllis Salyards  
[hpsalyar@tcgcs.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2012 11:24 AM  
**To:** Adams, John  
**Subject:** MCA

John,

The latest *Advisory* is superb. Congratulations!

Something that was not pointed out, but should be, was your donation of the portion of the proceeds on each and every medal sold in the Heritage auction, to the Smithsonian. That deserves special thanks from anyone with an interest in the National Numismatic Collection.

Apropos of your note on the Stack's-Bowers Americana sale, I was the successful bidder this time around, on the John Eager Howard original, Lot 6075--at roughly one-half what the inferior example I got outbid on, last September, went for. I've noted quite a bit of variability in the prices realized on Comitia medals, overall--any thoughts from your perspective?

Harry.

• • • •

Good morning, Harry - Thank you for the kudos, which I have passed along to Tony Lopez. He is a magician!

Congratulations on acquiring the Howard medal. You are nothing if not persistent. Variability in prices for such an item reflects the thinness of the market - you might expect that for an R-7 but, for an R-5, that is indeed noteworthy. We need more collectors and, to that end, I talked to my grandson's seventh grade class about Comitia's for an entire hour. The presentation was complete with pictures as well as actual medals. Their intense interest shows what the hobby could be if we editors (and a whole lot of others) do our job in propagating the message.

Stay well and continue to enjoy retirement. As always, John

• • • •

Dear John,

I hope you don't mind me contacting you, but the other day I became concerned about the veracity of the reported provenances for several Indian peace medals in the ANS collection and was wondering whether you think they have any merit. One in particular:

1925.73.1 is 4.1 in your census of Happy While United's, but I am having trouble understanding why a 1766 medal distributed mainly to Indians of the Ohio and Illinois Countries should have been found near Fort Niagara as this one is supposed to have been. It would make much more sense for the 1764 version, which was distributed to Six Nations Iroquois as well as to more westerly Indians at Fort Niagara to have been found near the fort. I am wondering if this provenance might be some kind of mistake referring to a 1764 piece.

Sincerely, Oliver (Hoover)

[The peace conference in 1766 was held at Oswego and Fort Niagara, though distant from Oswego, is on the direct route from the West thereto. Given that the lack of British hospitality was a proximate cause of Pontiac's Revolt, all the forts on the line of march would have been under instructions to provide refreshments to conference participants, both coming and going. Ed.]

• • • •

Dear Mr. Adams:

I don't know if the topic of storage and protection for the MCA medals has been addressed or not. I suggest using velvet covered steel cases cut for Airtite large, direct fit capsules. The only capsule that can be used is a Y-63, the Y-63 is a bit too large and will need some spacers - perhaps small pieces of closed cell foam - three pieces in each capsule. When placed in the steel case, the result is very nice looking. Please let me know what you think of this.

Don Young

[Don, can you send me an image of a medal so encased? The subject of storage and protection deserves much more attention than we give it. Dave Menchell was doing some work on 4 inch flips/boxes. Perhaps he can join in the discussion. Ed]



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From: Roderic H. Blackburn  
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2012 5:03 PM  
To: Adams, John  
Subject: Advisory

John, The new issue is indeed handsome and full of interesting content. Glad to get the extra info on B Arnold ("My loyalty for a Medal" perhaps, a la "My Kingdom for a Horse").

On another subject, perhaps you can give me advice on the attached. I have received from a friend photos of dozens of medals, US and European. They all look like they had been at the bottom of the sea for ages, with more or less awful surface (and likely some subsurface) corrosion. Is there any conservation measure that might help to reprieve these medals from Purgatory?

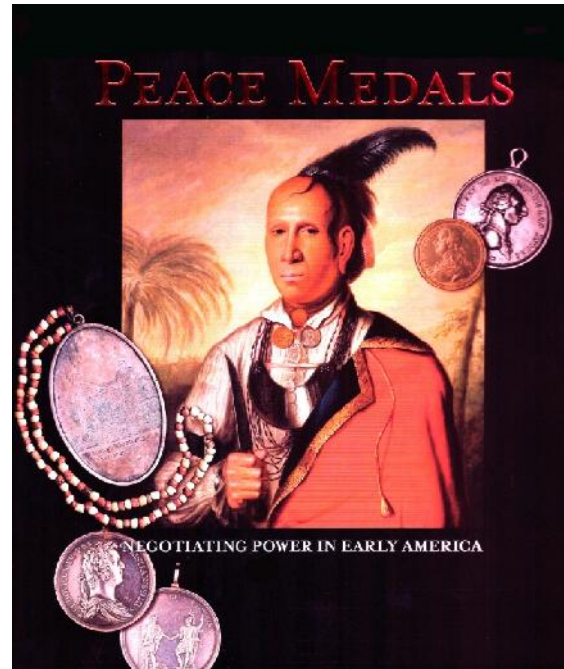
Best regards, Rod

[Rod, the medals look like they may have already been cleaned. Try a little CARE applied with a Q tip. They don't make this stuff anymore so, if need be, I will tell you where to find an equivalent. Ed.]



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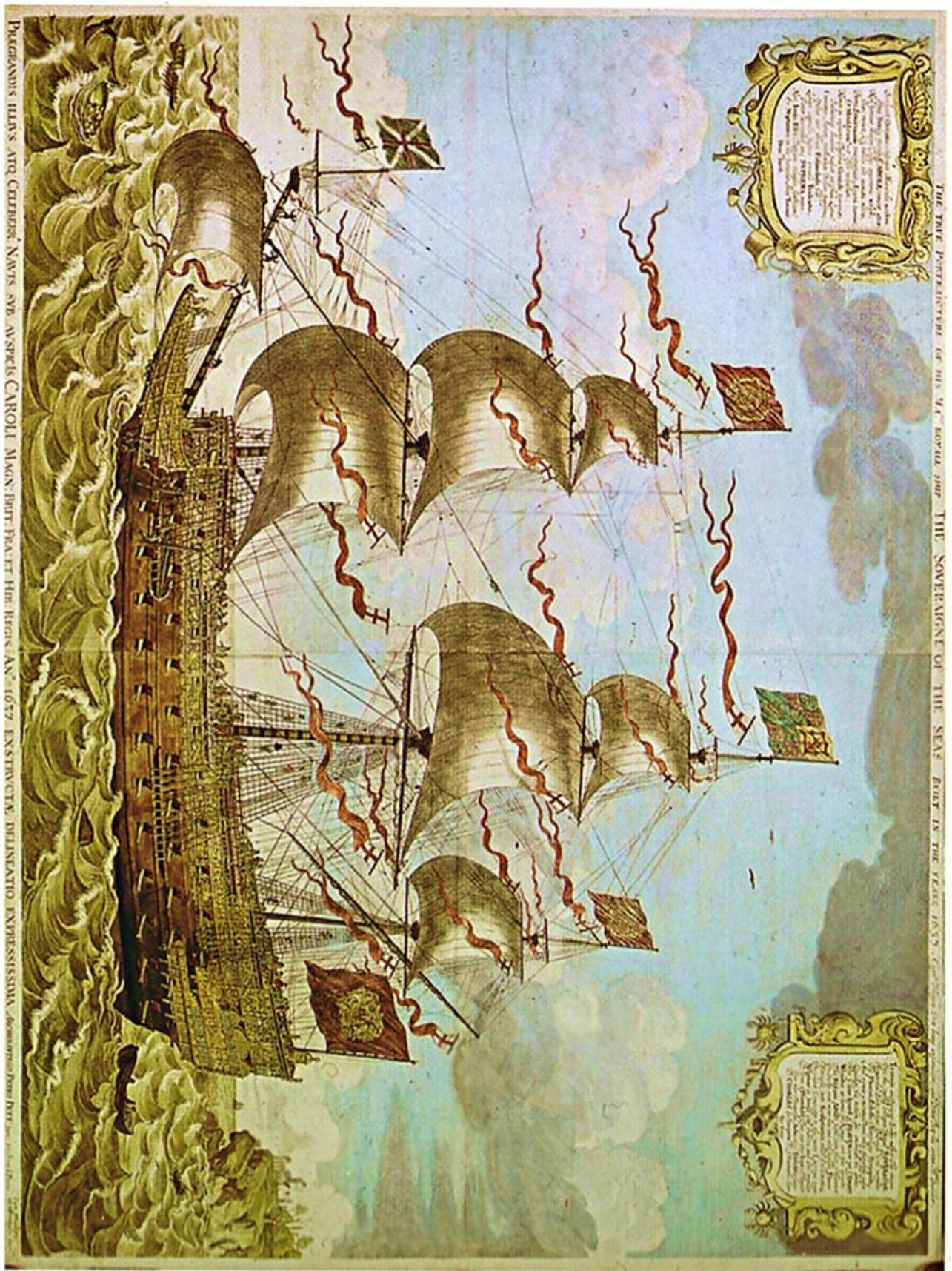
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J. Payne copperplate engraving of the Sovereign of the Seas, Commissioned by Charles I and launched at Woolwich October 13, 1637